



Executive Officer's Statement

February 16, 2006

VCGCB Welcomes New Agency Secretary and Board Chair

The Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board is delighted to welcome Rosario Marin, Secretary of the State and Consumer Services Agency, as its new chair. Governor Schwarzenegger appointed Ms. Marin to his cabinet on January 31. Secretary Marin has a wealth of experience as a public servant at the federal, state and local level. Prior to her appointment as Secretary, Ms. Marin was chair of California's Integrated Waste Management Board. From 2001 to 2003, she served as Treasurer of the United States. She served as a city council member and as Mayor of Huntington Park, California. Under Governor Pete Wilson, she was Deputy Director of the Governor's Office of Community Relations.

District Attorneys Focus on Crime Victim Issues

Karen McGagin, Executive Officer, and Laura Hill, Deputy Executive Officer for Revenue Recovery and Accounting, recently attended the winter workshop of the California District Attorneys Association (CDAA). The four-day workshop opened on January 23 with a plenary session: *Into the Future: Premier Crime Victim's Rights and Services for California*. In her opening remarks, CDAA president and Sacramento County District Attorney Jan Scully recognized the strong working relationship between the CDAA and the VCGCB.

Board member and San Bernardino County District Attorney Michael Ramos spoke about breaking new ground for victim services with enhanced victim's rights training for deputy district attorneys and new performance measurement systems to assess how well the criminal justice system works for crime victims. He also drew attention to the increases proposed for existing Joint Powers Verification Units in the Governor's 2007-2008 budget, and the additional amount budgeted for the VCGCB to create new Criminal Restitution Compacts with counties.

In addition to the plenary session, the winter workshop also featured a meeting of the CDAA Victim Right's Committee, and a meeting of the Victim Witness Coordinating Council.

VCGCB Publicizes January Action to Modify Mental Health Session Limits

The VCGCB Communication, Legislation and Policy Division embarked on a multifaceted approach to get the word out to the public about the changes the three-member Board enacted at the January 19 meeting. At that meeting, the Board increased the number of mental health sessions available to victims and their family members under a variety of circumstances and streamlined the reporting requirements for counselors and therapists. The changes, effective for applications received on or after January 24, 2006, are featured on the VCGCB website. Almost 4,000 mental health service providers received a letter thoroughly detailing the changes. Organizations such as the California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists, the California Mental Health Directors Association, the California Board of Psychology, and the California Board of Behavioral Sciences have also received the information.

VCGCB Anticipates Relocation

The VCGCB will relocate its offices later this year. The lease on the building the VCGCB currently occupies at 630 K Street expires in February 2006, and the VCGCB expects to move

into other quarters by the end of 2006. Space recently vacated by the Department of Consumer Affairs at 400 R Street is the focus for our relocation.

A New Strategic Plan Will Debut Soon

The VCGCB is in the final stages of developing a new strategic plan that will incorporate a streamlined business process and an emphasis on excellence in customer service. Executive staff members recently completed a two-day meeting to finalize the plan that will guide the VCGCB through the improvements anticipated in the coming year. Executive staff members met on January 25 and 26 to develop a new mission statement for the VCGCB and outline goals and objectives for the new strategic plan. On the first day of the meeting, the executive staff reviewed the input collected over the course of the last three months. In November, December, and early January, VCGCB employees and key outside stakeholders participated in a series of meetings, interviews, and focus groups to talk about the VCGCB's strengths, challenges, and weaknesses. Their input is a crucial component of the new plan. On the second day of the meeting, the executive staff outlined specific goals and objectives for the plan. During February and March, divisions and units will hold round table discussions to formulate specifics for an operational plan. The VCGCB will publish the complete plan at the end of March.

VCGCB Updates

California Police Chiefs Association Conference

The VCGCB staffed a booth at the California Police Chiefs Association Conference in Palm Springs on January 30-February 1. Hundreds of chiefs and administrators from throughout the state attended the event. The VCGCB staff attending to the booth took the opportunity to field many questions and to distribute the Board's publications.

Victim Compensation Program Advisory Committee to Meet March 15

The Victim Compensation Program Advisory Committee will meet on Wednesday, March 15 at the VCGCB office in Sacramento. The 12-member advisory committee is composed of representatives from state agencies and other entities serving victims, including the Office of Emergency Services; the Attorney General's Office; the Health and Human Services Agency; the Department of Corrections; the Judiciary; the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training; and victim advocacy organizations. The Committee works to identify crime victims' issues and needs with respect to compensation, as well as to provide feedback for Victim Compensation Program projects and initiatives. The Committee also provides an important avenue for coordination, networking, and new collaborative efforts among agencies, organizations and departments serving victims.